



Chasing the Sun in BLAH

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Education

The goal of the research project I am working on is to allow learners the opportunity to interactively explore the scientific consequences of alternative, hypothetical versions of Earth. Four "what-if" scenario earths have been created: baseline earth, earth without a moon, earth that is frozen over, and earth that is covered in lava. "What if the earth had no moon? What if the sun was further away or twice as close to earth?" The image depicts a digital simulation for Hearth, or a world where the sun is much closer to earth, as dubbed by Neil F. Comins. Middle school students are asked to make observations about each world and the differences between them while being prompted to think about the "why?" behind each hypothetical scenario. My research questions focus on whether video games like Minecraft have the potential to trigger and/or sustain STEM interest for middle school students.